

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH - HIGH STREET

The present Christ Church is the third to stand on this site. Three acres were set aside for a church here when Cambridge was laid out in 1684. The first church was constructed of wood in 1693. In ruinous condition, it was eventually torn down and replaced by a church in 1794. This one was destroyed by fire in 1882 and the present church was constructed in 1883. It is built of granite covered with green serpentine stone, in the High Victorian Gothic style. On the southeast corner of the church is a tall tower with an open belfry, ornamented by gargoyles, pinnacles, and iron finials. On the front of the nave is a large circular rose window and a row of smaller rectangular stained glass windows below, that were made in London. Four governors of Maryland are buried in Christ Church graveyard, and a monument commemorates the fifth.

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

## 1. Name

historic Christ Episcopal Church and Cemetery

and/or common Christ Episcopal Church and Cemetery

## 2. Location

street & number High Street n/a not for publication

city, town Cambridge n/a vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland code 24 county Dorchester code 019

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Vestry of Great Choptank Parish

street & number P. O. Box 456

city, town Cambridge n/a vicinity of state Maryland 21613

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Courthouse

street & number High Street

city, town Cambridge state Maryland 21613

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

☒ Maryland Historical Trust  
☐ Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1976 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

## 7. Description

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### Condition

☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☒ unaltered  
☐ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

### DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Christ Episcopal Church is a large stone structure built between 1883 and 1884 in the Gothic Revival style in the center of Cambridge, in Dorchester County on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The church and the adjoining cemetery sit prominently at the northeast corner of High and Church Streets at the point where High Street changes from a residential to a commercial neighborhood. The church is built of green serpentine stone on a cruciform plan with the nave running parallel to Church Street. The end of the nave facing High Street is marked by a large rose window above five smaller rectangular windows. The most prominent feature of the church is the impressive tower with its steeply pitched spire which stands at the southwest corner of the church. The principal entrance to the church is located on the south side of this tower, with secondary entrances located on a small eastern porch and on the south side of the east transept. The interior is cruciform in plan with side aisles and a vaulted ceiling. Much of the decoration, including that found on the capitals, pews and church furnishings is Gothic in inspiration. The adjoining cemetery is enclosed on three sides by a brick wall, parts of which date to the 1790s. It abuts directly on the sidewalk on High Street, unlike the church itself which is set back from the street. Within the cemetery are gravestones of various shapes and sizes which range in date from 1674 to the present. The church is virtually unchanged from its original appearance and neither the exterior nor the richly appointed interior has undergone significant alteration. The only exceptions to this include the construction of the Barber Memorial Hall at the northeast corner of the church in 1896 and the installation of several stained glass windows in the 1950s. The Barber Hall was constructed of the same material as the church and therefore does not detract from the original appearance of the building.

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Christ Episcopal Church is a large stone structure built between 1883 and 1884 in the Gothic Revival style in the center of Cambridge, a town on the Choptank River and seat of Dorchester County on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The church and adjoining cemetery are located on the northeast corner of High and Church Streets, with the church set back approximately fifty feet from High Street. By virtue of its prominent position and large scale, the church serves as an important focal point on High Street.

The church is built of granite covered with green serpentine stone. This same material was used when the Barber Memorial Hall was built onto the northwest corner of the church in 1896. A sand colored stone is used as trim around the window and door openings. The steeply pitched gable roofs are covered with slate shingles, as is the spire.

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National Park Service

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

In accordance with Gothic precedents, the church is built on a cruciform plan, with the nave running parallel to Church Street. The nave is six bays long with the transepts extending two bays on either side. A small enclosed porch extends from the south end of the east elevation and is raised on a flight of four steps. The gable end of the porch is covered with half-timbering and the eaves flare slightly on either side. There is a small wooden door on the east of the porch and another on the south side of the east transept.

The south or High Street elevation is the principal facade and is dominated by a large circular window with stone surrounds. Below it is a row of small rectangular windows separated by short marble columns with oversized Romanesque capitals. The windows are set within a large rectangular panel of sand colored stone which is topped by five triangularly shaped stone hood moulds. Above the rose window are two small lancet windows and atop the roof is a stone cross.

The most salient feature of the church is the tall two story tower with spire which stands at the southwest corner. The principal entrance to Christ Church is framed by a high pointed arch opening on the south side of the tower. A series of lancet windows with wooden louvers is set within the second story arch; this feature is found on the other three sides of the tower. A stone pinnacle rises from each corner of the tower. These are topped by steeply pitched pyramidal roofs with flaring eaves and have metal crozier finials. Two stone gargoyles extend from the base of each pinnacle. A blind arcade runs between the tower and the eight sided broach spire. Halfway up four of these sides is a hooded gablet with louvered lucarne window. The spire is topped by a metal cross.

There is a one and one-half story round tower with a conical roof attached to the northwest side of the larger tower. It has small rectangular windows with the top half-window capped by a squat, pointed arch.

The nave facades are both six bays long and are pierced by three squat pointed arch clerestory windows. The expressed aisle, which projects approximately four feet out from the nave, has six lancet windows, separated by small stepped buttresses.

The gable end of each of the transepts is pierced by a squat pointed arch window on the second story, below which are three smaller rectangular windows.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

The Barber Memorial Hall, now used as the church office, was built in 1896 at the northwest corner of the church. The entrance is on the middle of the Church Street facade at the top of five concrete steps. The scale of door and window openings is in keeping with the rest of the church. Embedded in a stone on the Church Street facade is the inscription, "The Barber Memorial, 1896."

Like the exterior, the interior of Christ Church has undergone only minor alterations since the 1880s. The walls are plaster while the ceiling and furnishings are dark mahogany.

The nave is six bays long and is marked by alternately wide and slender square piers topped by ornate Gothic capitals. The large piers support three wide arches with two smaller arches within. A squat pointed arch window pierces the triforium level of the three arches. A narrow aisle runs on either side of the nave, the walls of which are pierced by six small narrow windows with modern (1950s) stained glass. The roof of the nave is supported by a modified hammerbeam system with jig-sawn struts and braces; chandeliers hang from the ends of the hammerbeams.

Giant pointed arches supported on piers of clustered columns separate the nave from the chancel and transepts. The piers between the crossing and the chancel are particularly noteworthy and consist of triple clustered columns with foliated capitals atop a short pier with a ledge that breaks out to support a carved stone angel's head.

The north end is divided into choir and chancel. The appointments in this part of the church, including the choir stalls, brass lectern and communion rails, bishop's and deacon's chairs and altar are executed in the High Victorian Gothic style and have been well preserved.

Most of the stained glass windows are of the period, including the fine Tiffany altar window. The rose window dates from the 1930s and there are also several windows of contemporary design in the nave which date from 1954.

The cemetery, parts of which undoubtedly date to the 1690s, has been considerably enlarged over the succeeding centuries. Likewise, the enclosing walls date from several different periods in the church's history. The brick wall along High Street abuts directly on the sidewalk and is approximately five feet in height with six feet high square brick posts topped by corbelled caps. It is this wall which was mentioned in the vestry minutes of 1789.<sup>1</sup> When built, the original wall extended along the entire width of the graveyard to what is now the west side of Church Street (this street was not cut through until 1795, necessitating alterations to the c. 1790 wall).<sup>2</sup> The brick wall



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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

beside the house at 207 High Street marks the eastern boundary of the original church land. The "boulder stone" mentioned in the indenture that conveyed the property to Elizabeth Caille is embedded in the end of this wall facing High Street and has cut into it the initials GCP (Great Choptank Parish). In 1906 a brick wall was built to separate the church cemetery from a private cemetery which lay to the north.

## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1883

Builder/Architect Charles Cassell, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: B, C

Applicable Exception: A

### SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Christ Episcopal Church, built between 1883 and 1884, is significant for two reasons. As an example of late Victorian Gothic Revival architecture, Christ Church is unsurpassed elsewhere in Cambridge or Dorchester County. Designed by the prominent nineteenth century Baltimore architect Charles Cassell, Christ Church reflects both the architectural sophistication of its clergy and congregation and the preference of the Episcopal Church in general for the Gothic style. In addition, Christ Church, the parish church for Great Choptank Parish, has played an important role in the history of Cambridge and Dorchester County. Its parishioners have included five governors of Maryland, a state Attorney General, an Ambassador to the Netherlands, local judges and lawyers and several U. S. Congressmen. These men, along with numerous local heroes of the Revolutionary War, are buried in the adjoining cemetery, making it one of the most historically interesting religious complexes in the state.

### HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Great Choptank was one of the thirty parishes created by an act of the Provincial Assembly in 1692 which established the Church of England in Maryland. Services were for a time held in the courthouse and the money thus saved was used to build chapels of ease in other parts of the county. Between 1693 and 1696 however, the vestry decided to build a parish church in Cambridge. The location of this first church is not known, although it was probably on part of present day Church Street near the Post Office. From the beginning, the area around it was used for burials in unmarked graves and there are undoubtedly many bodies interred under the present church building.

Despite the financial hardships brought on by the disestablishment of the Church in England after the Revolution, the parish was able to replace the original church with a second church in 1788. This one built in the style of the standard Wren-Gibbs parish church of the eighteenth century, survived more or less intact for nearly one hundred years. The question of whether it should be repaired or replaced was the subject of numerous discussions within the congregation in the years before it was finally destroyed by fire on Thanksgiving Day 1882.

The decision to rebuild immediately and to employ an architect of some reknown was made by the church's Rector at the time, The Reverend Theodore P. Barber (1822-1892). The Reverend Barber, who served the parish between 1849 and 1892 was responsible for much of the building activity which occurred in Great Choptank Parish during the nineteenth century. As a result,

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

The Reverend Barber was known to many prominent Maryland Architects. It was at his suggestion that the vestry consulted with the well known Baltimore architect, I. Crawford Neilson, and later travelled to Baltimore to view several churches.

Although the design prepared by Neilson was rejected as being too expensive, his advice to the Reverend Barber proved invaluable and probably led to the decision to employ another prominent Baltimore architect, Charles F. Cassell.

Cassell, who practiced until his death in 1916, was a charter member (1870) of the Baltimore chapter of the A.I.A. Among his numerous architectural commissions were those for the Chamber of Commerce building in Baltimore, Bishop Whittingham Memorial Church (St. Katherine's) and Bishop Cummings Memorial Church (Emanuel Church), all listed in the National Register. Other notable buildings include the Greek Orthodox Church on Preston Street and the Stafford Hotel, both in Baltimore.

The design and appearance of Christ Church bears comparison with Cassell's earlier (1878) work at Bishop Cummings church. The disposition of small windows within a larger arch, the use of squat arched clerestory windows, and the separation of windows by short Romanesque columns are features characteristic of both churches.

Cassell's previous experience in the design of churches for Episcopal worship undoubtedly recommended him to The Reverend Barber. Under the influence of the Ecclesiological movement during the nineteenth century, the Episcopal Church throughout America took particular interest in the design of religious buildings. The influence of this movement is indicated not only in the selection by Cassell of the Gothic style for Christ Church, but also in the use of a cruciform plan with expressed transepts and an impressive chancel. Both in its design and appearance Christ Church shares many similarities with St. John's, Huntington in Baltimore, one of the earliest and most influential products of the Ecclesiological movement in Maryland.<sup>4</sup> As an example of late Victorian Gothic Revival architecture, Christ Church is unsurpassed elsewhere in Cambridge or Dorchester County.

As the center of a parish nearly three hundred years old Christ Church has played an important role in the history of Cambridge and Dorchester County. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the church counted among its parishioners most of the leaders in the political, economic and social life of the county; many of them are buried in the adjoining graveyard. Among these are five governors of Maryland: John Henry (1797-1798), Charles Goldsborough (1819), Henry Lloyd (1885-1888), Phillips Lee Goldsborough (1912-1916) and Emerson Harrington (1916-1920). Also buried in the graveyard are Robert Goldsborough, delegate to both the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention, William Vans Murray, U. S. Congressman and Minister to the Netherlands from 1797-1801, and Joseph Kemp and Daniel Maynadier, early rectors of Christ



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date entered

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Church. Two of the oldest graves in the county, those of Magdalen Stevens, who died in 1678 and William Stevens who died in 1684, were moved here from a site outside of Cambridge. Also moved were numerous graves of Dorchester County natives who fought in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Vestry Minutes of Great Choptank Parish (Hall of Records, Annapolis) p. 18

<sup>2</sup>Kinnamon, Lester Bryan "The History of Great Choptank Parish" in Great Choptank Parish 1693-1694, (Cambridge, Md.) 1975, p. 25

<sup>3</sup>Vestry Minutes, April 9, 1883, p. 317

<sup>4</sup>Stanton, Phoebe B. The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press), 1968, p. 275

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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SEE CONTINUATION SHEET # 5

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 2 acresQuadrangle name Cambridge, MarylandQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	8	4	0	6	2	0	0	4	2	6	9	6	3	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property includes only the existing city lot occupied by the church and its graveyard. Boundaries utilize existing property lines. See attached site plan.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	n/a	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Geoffrey B. Henryorganization Maryland Historical Trustdate 9 November 1983street & number 21 State Circletelephone (301) 269-2438city or town Annapolisstate Maryland 21401

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *J. M. H.*3-12-84title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

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1601403608

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Great Choptank Parish

AND/OR COMMON

Christ Episcopal Church

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Church and High Streets (northwest Corner)

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Cambridge

VICINITY OF

1

STATE

COUNTY

Maryland

Dorchester

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_\_DISTRICT

\_\_\_PUBLIC

☒ OCCUPIED

\_\_\_AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_MUSEUM

☒ BUILDING(S)

☒ PRIVATE

\_\_\_UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_\_PARK

\_\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_\_BOTH

\_\_\_WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_\_SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

☒ RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_OBJECT

\_\_\_IN PROCESS

\_\_\_YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_NO

\_\_\_MILITARY

\_\_\_OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Vestry of Great Choptank Parish

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_\_FEDERAL \_\_\_STATE \_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Christ Episcopal Church is built of granite covered with green serpentine stone, in the High Victorian Gothic style. It has a long, narrow, high central nave, with a number of smaller roofs projecting from it. The main entrance is through the base of a tower on the southeast corner of the church. The tower has an open belfry (one open arch above three smaller arches). At each corner are two gargoyles, and the four corner pinnacles have crozier shaped iron finials. The spire is covered with slate as are all of the roofs. On the front facade is a large circular rose window, and a row of smaller rectangular stained glass windows with pointed stone arches and abbreviated Romanesque columns of marble. These windows were made by the Mowbrays of London and were presented to the church by Charles Steele in memory of Isaac Nevitt Steele who died in 1891. In 1896, a parish hall (Barber Memorial) was added at the southwest corner on the back of the south transept.

The interior is cruciform in shape with huge arches spanning the chancel and the transepts. The nave has flanking nave arcades set on alternating piers, i.e. three large arches with two smaller arches within. The capitals of the piers are modified corinthian. The ceiling and furnishings are dark mahogany. Most stained glass is of the period, although eight small windows in the nave have fine contemporary glass (c. 1954) by Stewart LeCompte of New York City.

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

## SPECIFIC DATES

## BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

History:

Christ Episcopal Church is the third church to stand on this site. When the town of Cambridge was laid out in 1684, three acres were set aside for a church and were known as the church lands. The first church on the property was constructed of wood in 1693, and served for one hundred years until it was in such ruinous condition that it had to be torn down. The second church was built of brick in 1794. This one was destroyed by fire in 1882, and the present Christ Church was constructed in 1883. The oldest portion of the graveyard dates back to the construction of the original church, and probably precedes it. Although the first interments are unmarked, there are stones from Magdalen and John Stevens who died in 1678 and 1684 respectively. These stones were brought there in 1940 from a private burial ground. In one corner of the graveyard lie heroes of the Revolutionary War. Four governors of Maryland are buried in Christ Church graveyard, and a monument has been erected to commemorate a fifth. They were all members of Great Choptank Parish of which Christ Church is the parish church.

Significance:

Christ Church is an example of High Victorian church architecture in the manner of the followers of Henry Hobson Richardson.



**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

William Morgan, University of Delaware, Department of Art History  
 Lascowski, Arthur, Papers

Kinnamon, Lester

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Catherine L. Moore

ORGANIZATION

DATE

2/19/76

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Route 3, Box 32

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Cambridge

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
 (301) 267-1438

## Christ Episcopal Church

The present church, completed between 1883 and 1885, is the third building to stand on this site. The first structure was built around 1700 and was torn down in the 1790's to make room for the second church. That edifice burned down in 1882, to be replaced by the present church, which was built in the High Victorian Gothic style.

The General Assembly established Great Choptank Parish in 1693 in "An Act for the Service of Almighty God and the Establishment of the Protestant Religion within this Province." Passed in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution in England, the law officially established the Anglican Church in Maryland and assessed all taxables forty pounds of tobacco annually for the upkeep of their local parishes. The legislature divided the province into parishes, including two in Dorchester County; Dorchester Parish at Vienna and Great Choptank Parish at Cambridge. We know that the church in Cambridge was not constructed immediately because in 1695 the authorities in Annapolis ordered the parish to use the county courthouse for services, using the money saved to build a chapel of ease at another location in the county. It is uncertain when the first church was built on this spot, but it seems to have been after 1695 and not later than 1706. In July 1706, when the town commissioners laid out the site of Cambridge, the parish received three acres fronting 396 feet along High Street. The land ran from the present boundary between 205 and 207 High Street to a point in the middle of what is now Church Street. The first church was a modest wooden structure located just to the right of the present church as seen from High Street. The parish seems to have been a small one throughout the colonial period. The annual assessment of tobacco supplied an uneven and usually meager source of income due to fluctuating prices. To supplement this income the vestry asked the General Assembly

Christ Episcopal Church (continued)

for permission to lease some of the church lands. In 1750, the parish leased the northeast portion, i.e. the part facing the river, to John Caile for five shillings a year.

The American Revolution brought difficult times to the Anglican Church in Maryland. The war divided an insurgent congregation from a generally loyalist clergy, often resulting in the flight of the latter back to England. In addition, the growth of Methodism in Dorchester County, beginning during the Revolution, made that religion the dominant faith in the county by 1800. But probably the most damaging effect of the war was the church's loss of its tax support. Great Choptank had to rely on its own resources to overcome the many difficulties that confronted it after the Revolution.

The most pressing need was a new church to replace the old structure that had fallen into disrepair. Various plans were devised including a lottery. In 1792 the vestry gave out contracts for construction of the new church. The parish raised another 421 pounds in 1794 from the sale of the land that had been leased to John Caile. The second church, built between 1793 and 1797, was a brick structure, larger than the first building and containing a steeple and bell. It was located where the south corner of the present church now stands. As viewed from High Street the second church occupied the left front corner of the present church. It ran back for half of the distance of the present building and half the distance across the front.

Great choptank Parish Remained in a period of decline in the first half of the Nineteenth Century because of a shortage of clergy and small membership. But after 1849, when the Reverend Theodore Barber became rector, the parish's fortunes improved. Barber acquired land on High Street from the Goldsborough heirs and built the present rectory (ses 107 High Street). He was also responsible for enlarging

## Christ Episcopal Church (continued)

and improving the church as the parish's membership increased. By early 1882, the congregation was discussing the possibility of expanding the church, with a minority favoring a complete remodeling of the exterior of the Gothic style.

Circumstances took matters out of the parish's hands. On the afternoon of November 30, 1882, Thanksgiving Day, the church caught fire. A few hours later all that stood were the charred walls. Construction began the following year on the present church, and was completed in 1885.

Christ Church cemetery is also of historic interest. A list of those buried here is almost a directory of prominent people in Cambridge in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries. Included are five governors of Maryland: Charles Goldsborough, John Henry, Emerson C. Harrington, Phillips Lee Goldsborough and Henry Lloyd. Other leading citizens are John Caile, William Vans Murray in an unmarked grave, Dr. Joseph E. Muse, Colonel Clement Sulivane, Judge James A. Stewart, William H. Barton, Jr. and W. Grason Winterbottom. In the early part of the twentieth century Guy Steele transferred the graves of many revolutionary soldiers from private cementeries in the county to Christ Church. The graveyard wall facing High Street and bordering 213 High Street dates from the 1790's.

Christ Church is significant as the parish of many of the influential people of Cambridge in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries. Many of these prominent citizens lived along High Street where they formed a closely knit, inbred society. Their wealth came from the possession of land and slaves, or the practice of law and medicine. Although the majority of Dorchester County and Cambridge was Methodist by the early Nineteenth century, the aristocracy of High Street remained largely Episcopalian.

## Christ Episcopal Church (continued)

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## Christ Church (continued)

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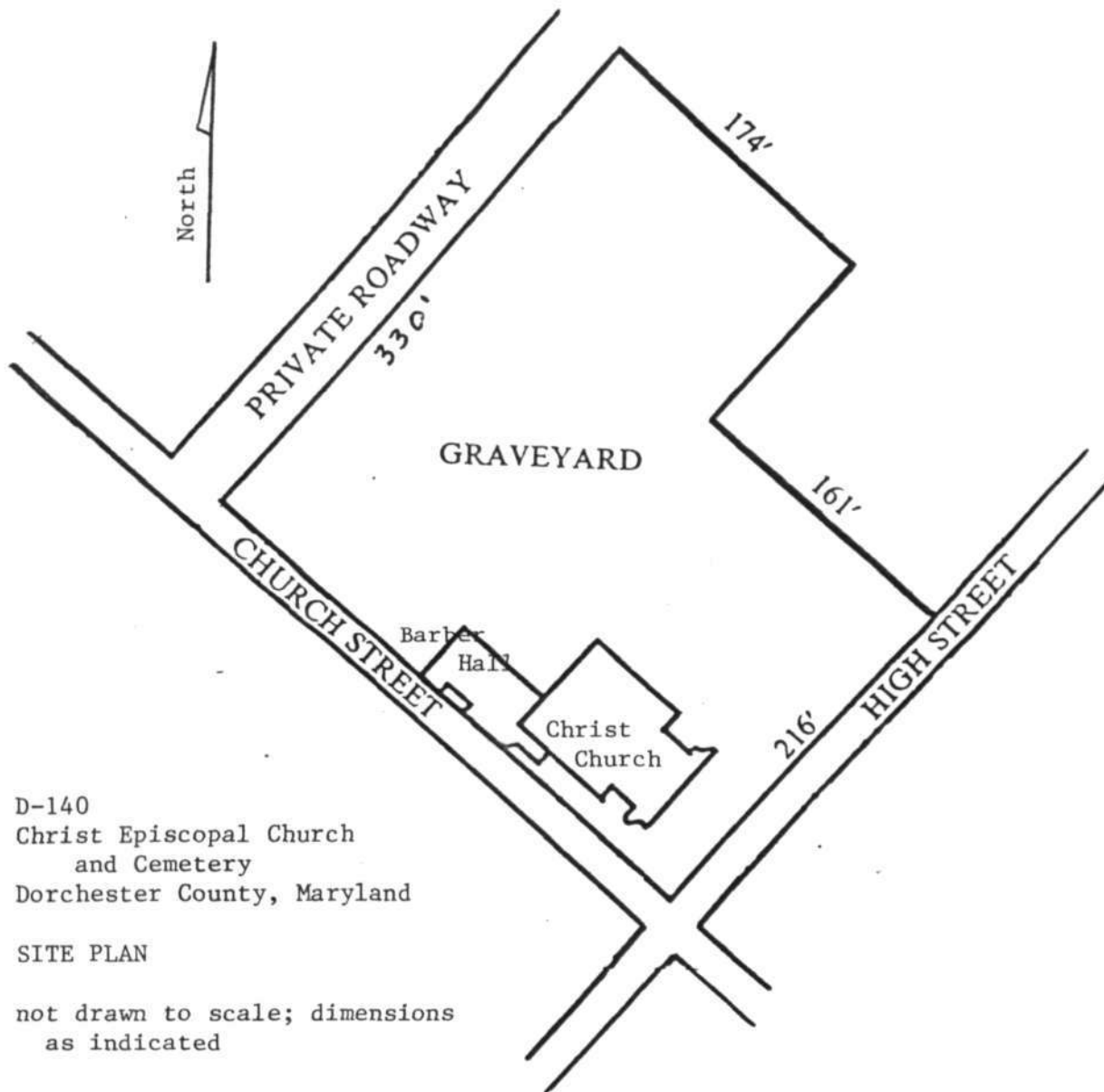
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Research by:

Terrance P. Walbert

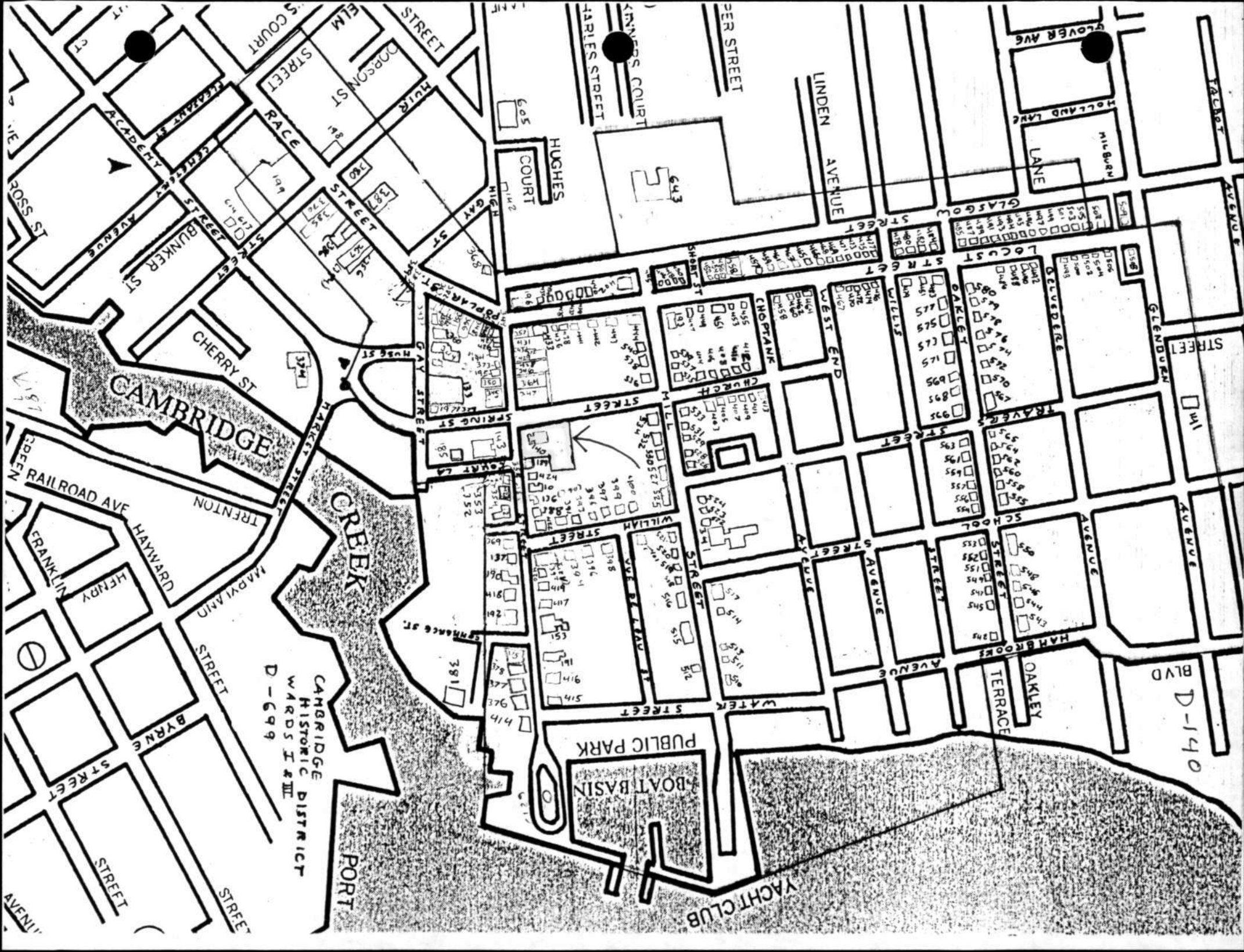
1976



D-140  
Christ Episcopal Church  
and Cemetery  
Dorchester County, Maryland

SITE PLAN

not drawn to scale; dimensions  
as indicated



D-140  
CHRIST  
EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH  
DORCHESTER  
COUNTY, MD.

18-406200-  
4269630

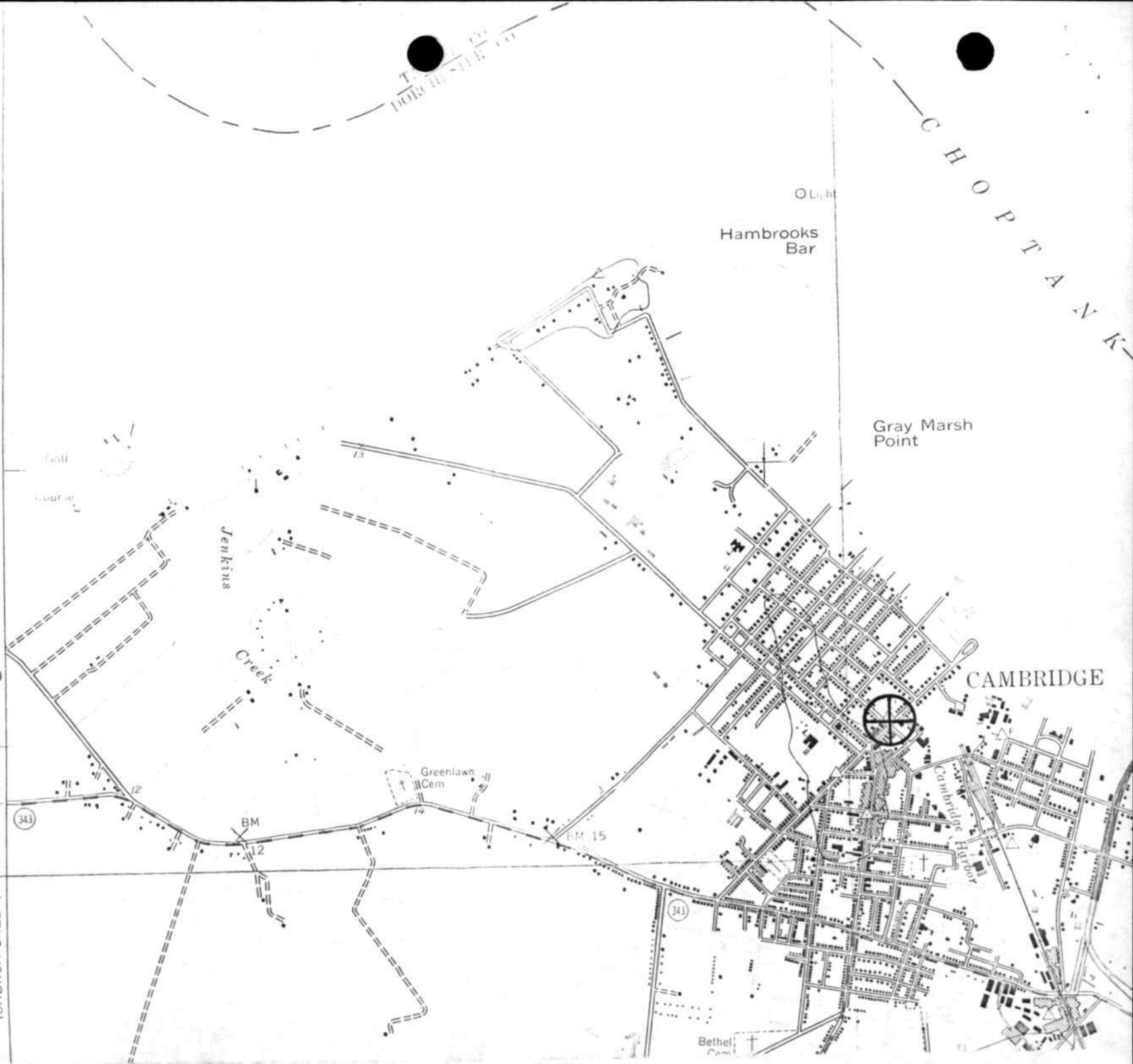
5761 II SW  
(CHURCH CREEK)

LLOYDS (3.5 MI.)

35'

4272

473



T. DORCHESTER CO.

CHOPTANK

O.L.H.

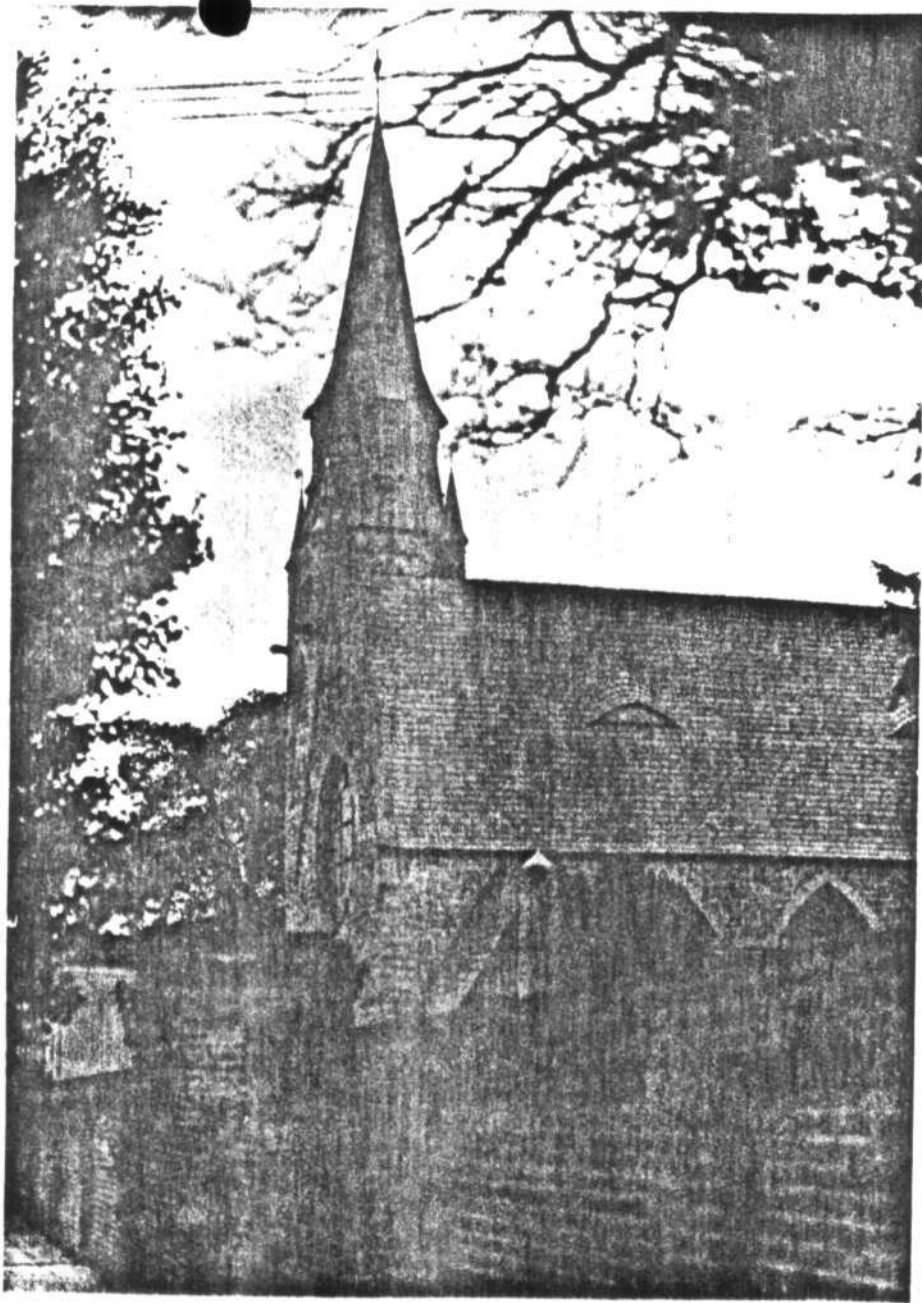
Hambrooks  
Bar

Gray Marsh  
Point

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge Harbor

Bethel  
Cem.



D-140





Fig 5.6 @ 11/96 13X150

Christ Episcopal Church

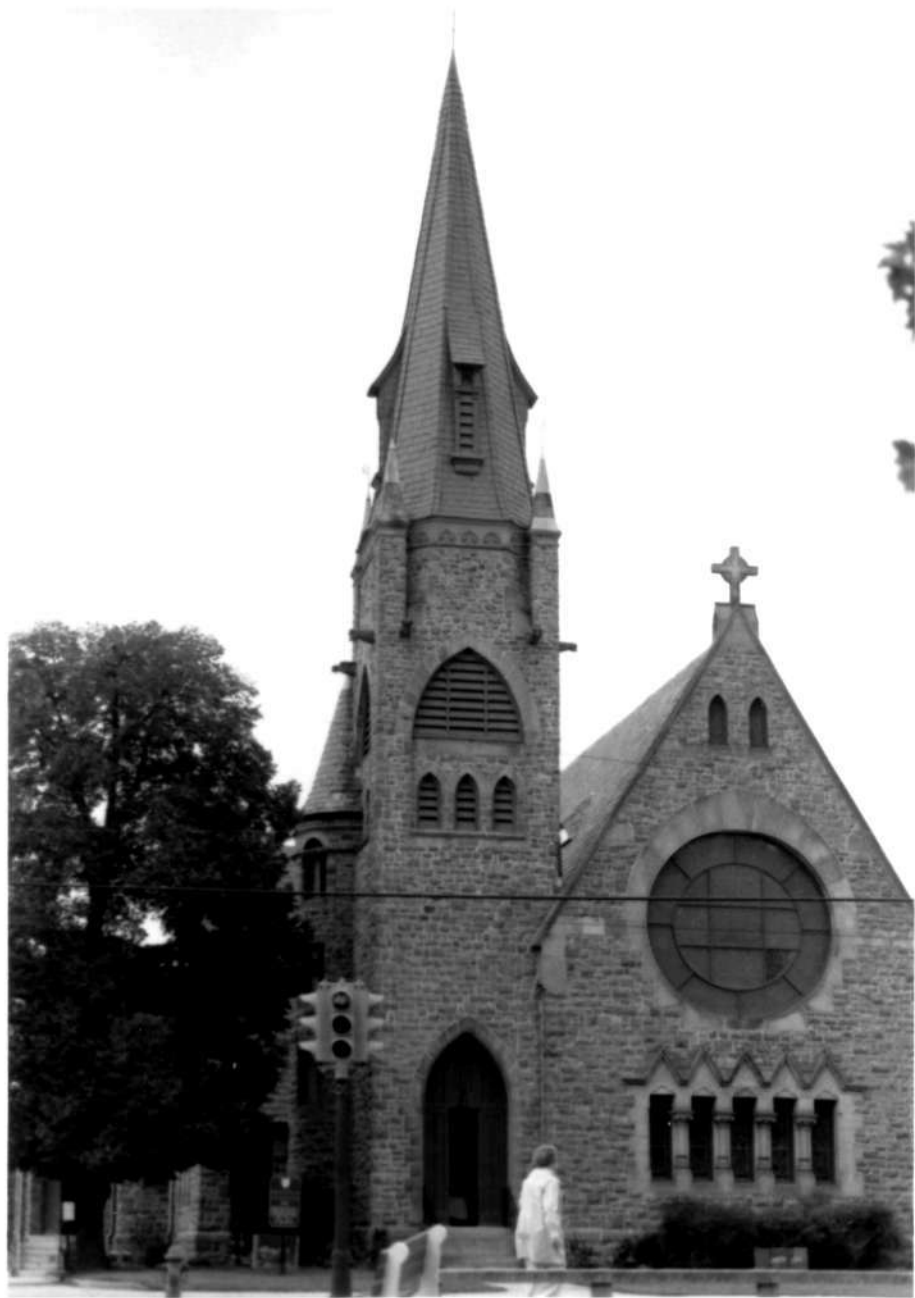
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of the Library of Congress

Chapter 5, Fig. 6



9067 JA A73463 JA



D-140

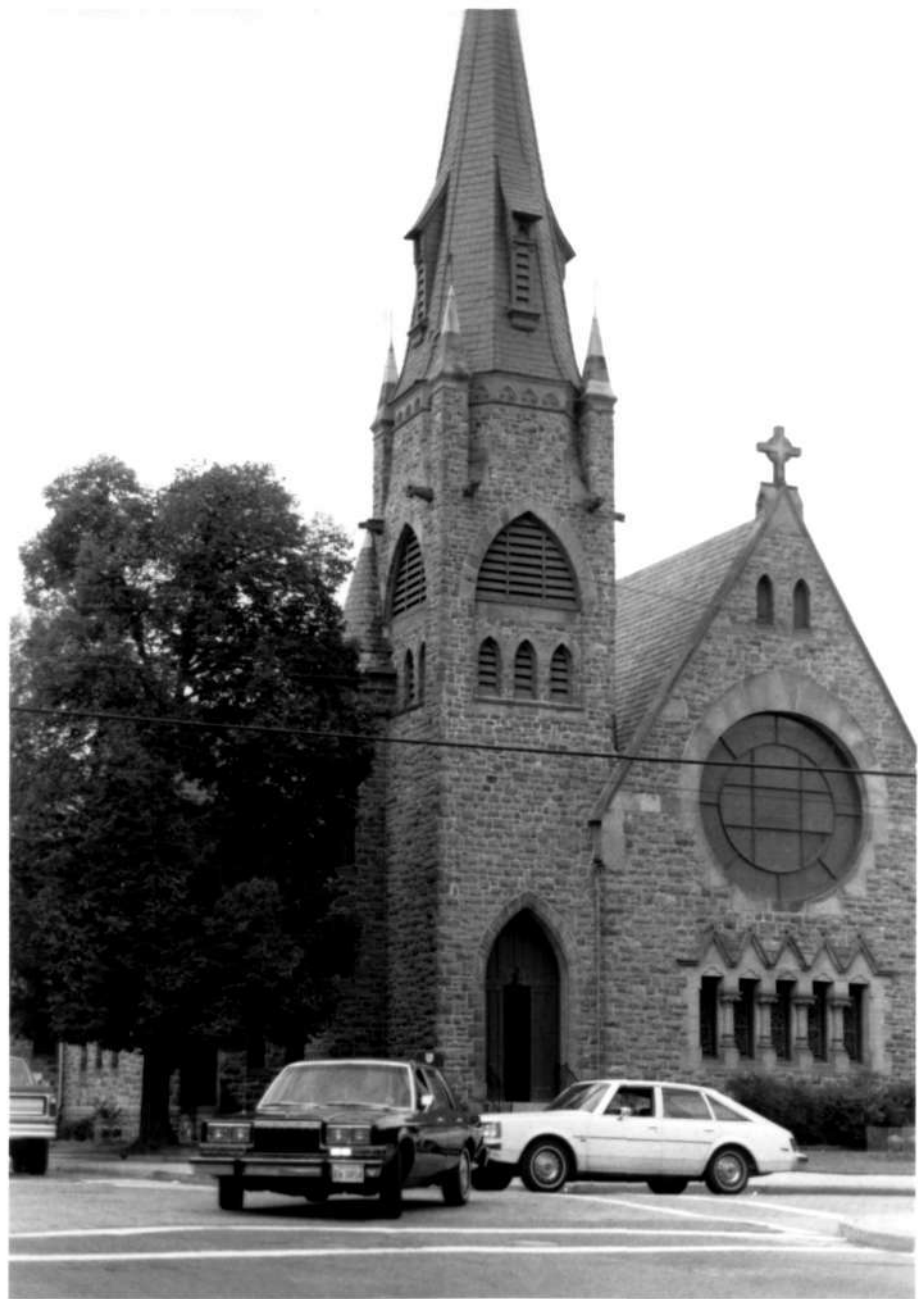
Christ Episcopal Church  
Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD.

South View

22/





D-140

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD

S View

3/



D-140

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD

SE view from Cemetery

4/



D-140

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

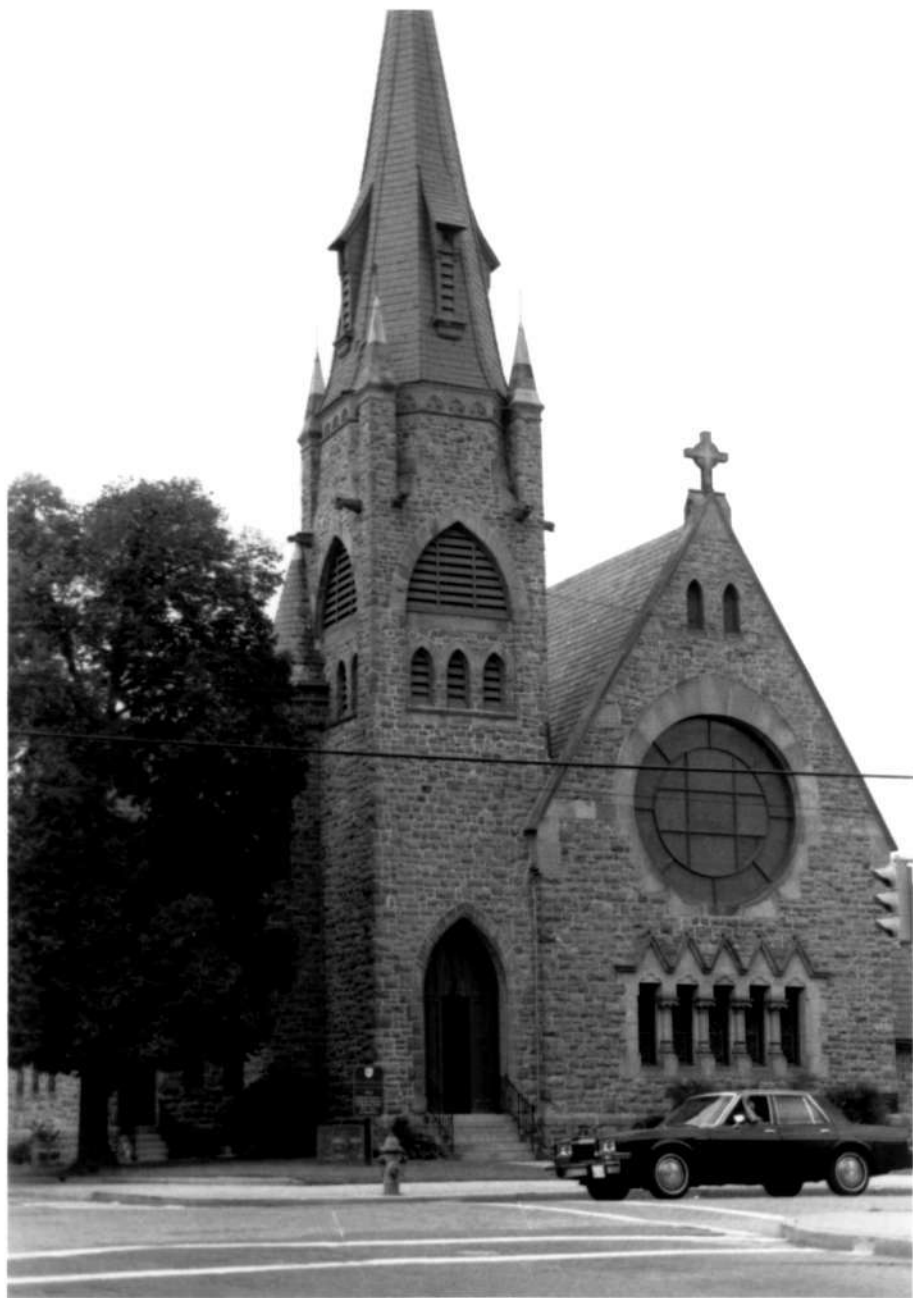
Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD.

SE view from Cemetery

6/

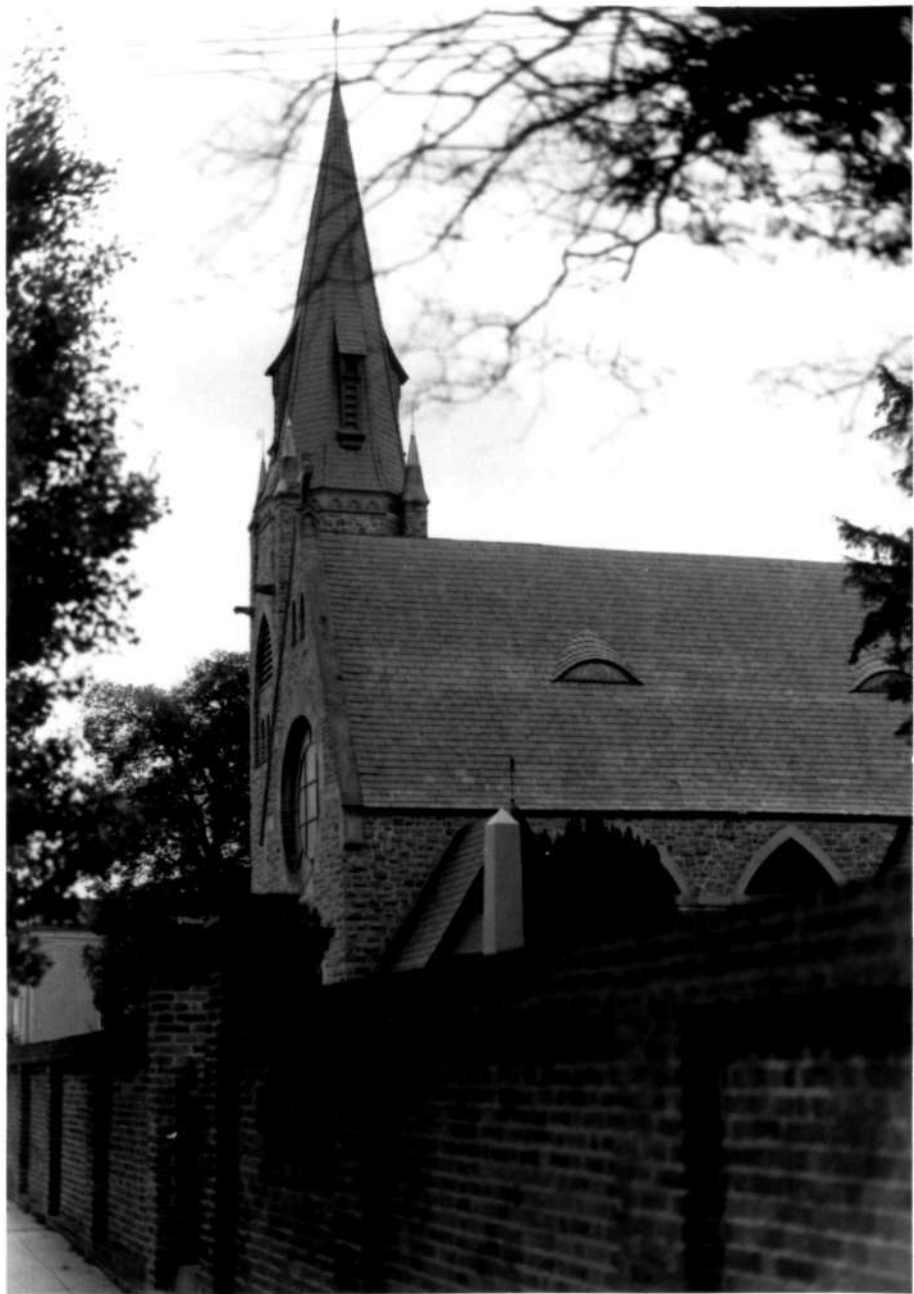




D-140

Christ Episcopal Church  
Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD  
Geoffrey Henry 9/53

MHT-neg



D-140

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge, Dorchester Co., Maryland

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD.

E view from Cemetery

2/



D-140

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD.

Detail of SE corner of Tower

7/





D-140

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD.

Barber Hall, W view

16/



D-140

Christ Episcopal Church

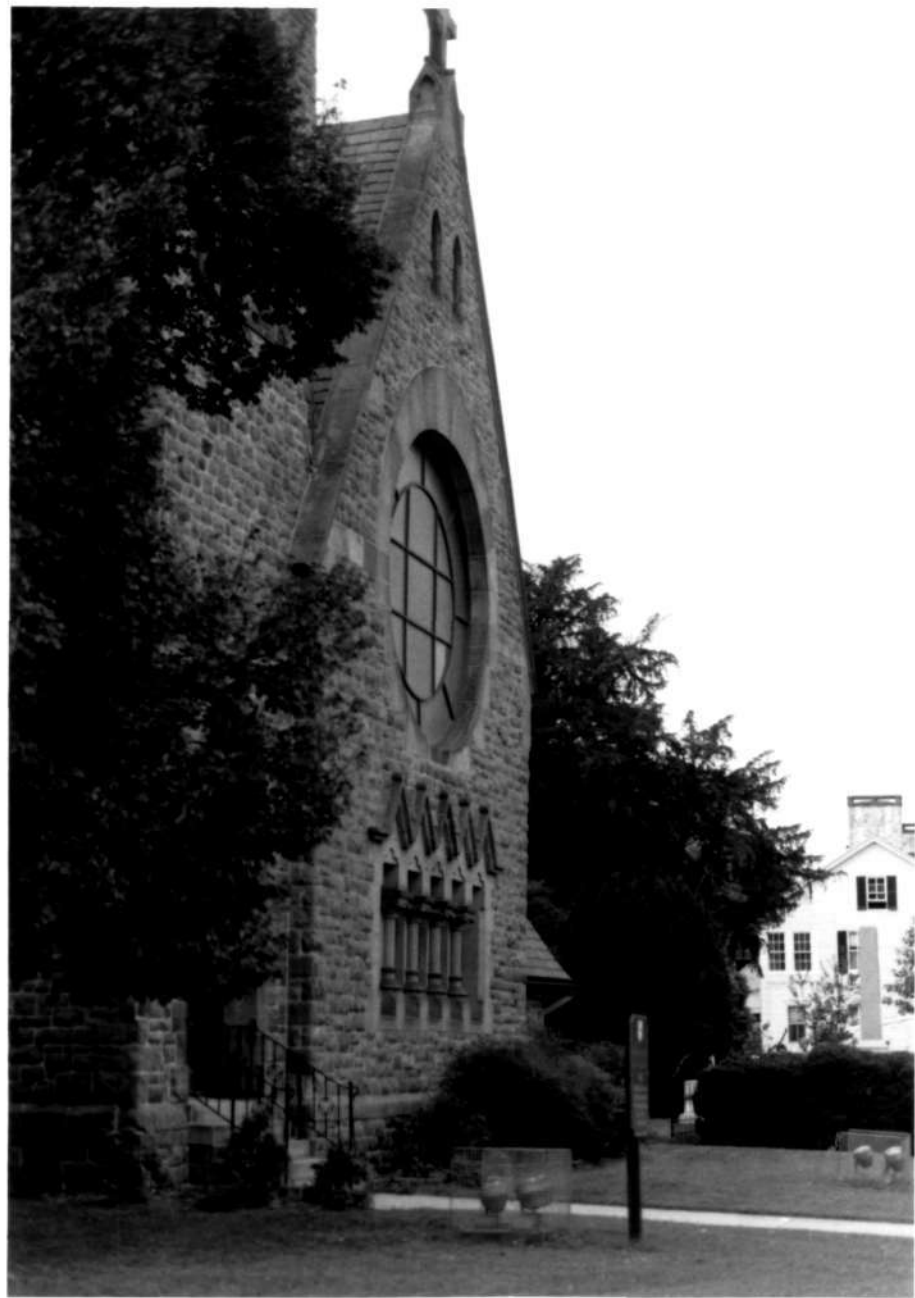
Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD.

NW Corner of Tower

10/



D-140

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD.

SW view

12/





D-140

Christ Episcopal Church  
Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD.

E. View from Cemetery

14/



D-140

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD.

Detail of Windows on South Elevation

20/



D-140

Christ Episcopal Church  
Cambridge, Dorchester Co., MD.

Geoffrey Henry 9/83

MHT, 21 State Circle, Annapolis, MD.  
High Street looking W from SW Corner  
of Church Property

18/





Christ Episcopal Church Cambridge Mel  
D

D-140

Will Morgan June 1969



Christ Episcopal Church Cambridge  
D

D-140

will morgan June 1969



Christ Episcopal Church Cambridge <sup>D</sup> Mass

D-140

Will Morgan June 1969



Christ Episcopal Church Cambridge <sup>2nd</sup>  
D-

D-140

Will Morgan June 1969





Christ Episcopal Church Cambridge D Md.

D-140

W Morgan June 1968



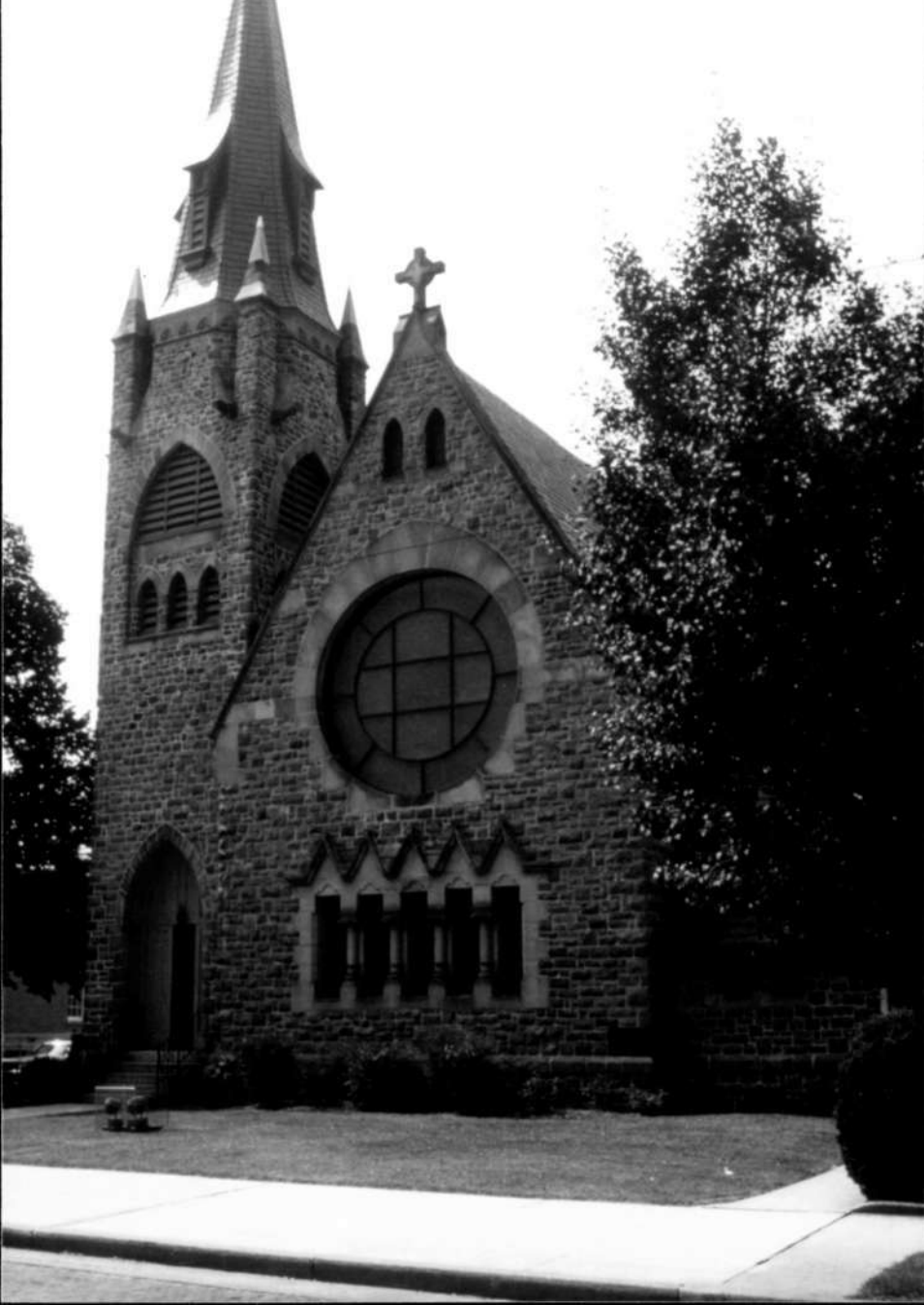
Christ Episcopal Church

D-1410

Cambridge

Dor. Co.

9/82



D-1410

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge

9/82



CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH - 213 HIGH ST., CAMBRIDGE, MD  
EAST FACADE - CL. MOORE, 1976

D-140

48%





D-140

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge

1975



D-142

Christ Episcopal Church

Cambridge

1975



D-140

Christ Episcopal Church  
Cambridge

1975



5-38752-710

*Bryhila H*  
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